

UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, April 13, 2017 6:30 PM

Minutes

Planning Commissioners Present: Chair Cynthia Seybolt, Carolyn Gregson, Catherine Kearns, David Edson, Irene Linde, Nancy Bergersen

Staff/Municipal Representatives Present: Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

Others Present: Johnathan Drew, Underhill Resident; Matt Chapek, Development Review Board Representative

[6:30] The Planning Commission convened at Underhill Town Hall at 6:30pm.

[6:32] Chair C. Seybolt called the meeting to order. Those present introduced themselves.

[6:32] **Chair C Seybolt asked for a motion to amend the agenda by establishing a public comment period, rearranging the scheduled items, and adding "other business" to the agenda.**

Commissioner Edson made a motion to amend the agenda, which was seconded by Commissioner Bergersen. **The motion passed unanimously.**

[6:34] Resident Johnathan Drew was invited to interview for a Planning Commission vacancy. He stated that he wanted to be on the Planning Commission so he could contribute to the Town. He communicated that when in a disagreement with someone, he attempts to find a common ground, understand his or her perspective, and collaborate to find an answer. Mr. Drew stated that he was flexible with his schedule and would make the Planning Commission a priority. He responded to Commissioner Edson's question that while preservation of land and property rights conflict with one another, he would like the processes to be open to the public and the regulations to be fair and predictable.

[6:40] Mr. Drew asked the Commission what projects they are currently working on and what projects they expect to be working on. Commissioner Linde stated that the Commission works with coordinating the Zoning Regulations with the Town Plan; Commissioner Gregson stated that the Commission is also responding to questions by the Development Review Board; and Chair C. Seybolt stated that the Commission has the ongoing task of addressing the goals and policies in the Town Plan, as well as developing the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Drew responded to Commissioner Kearns' question that he could bring an organization/business perspective to the Commission, as well as help with public outreach.

[6:51] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to enter into executive session to discuss the Planning Commission vacancies.** Commissioner Kearns made the motion to enter into executive session, which was seconded by Commissioner Edson. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[7:22] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to come out of executive session.** Commissioner Bergersen made the motion to exit executive session, which was seconded by Commissioner Linde. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[7:23] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to nominate Johnathan Drew for one of the Planning Commission vacancies.** Commissioner Linde made the motion to nominate Johnathan Drew for one of the Planning Commission vacancies, which was seconded by Commissioner Gregson. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[7:24] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to nominate David Glidden for one of the Planning Commission vacancies.** Commissioner Kearns made the motion to nominate David Glidden for one of the Planning Commission vacancies, which was seconded by Commissioner Linde. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[7:25] A quorum will be present for a special meeting on April 27.

[7:26] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to approve the minutes of April 6, 2017.** Commissioner Bergersen made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Edson. **The minutes of April 6, 2017 were unanimously approved.**

[7:27] A discussion ensued about the Rules of Procedure. The only proposed amendment was by Chair C. Seybolt, which was to amend the Rules of Procedure to change the stated meeting day from Wednesday to Thursday. This was presented to the Commission 24 hours in advance as required by the Rules of Procedure. **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to amend the Rules of Procedure as presented.** Commissioner Edson moved to amend the Rules of Procedure as amended, which was seconded by Commissioner Gregson. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

[7:30] Chair C. Seybolt distributed a thank you card to the Commission to sign thanking Mr. Ross Brewer for preserving and renovating the old schoolhouse in Underhill Flats.

[7:31] A discussion ensued regarding multi-family housing and accessory dwellings. Staff Member Strniste presented a chart that he distributed to the Commission, which clarifies the intent for the inclusion of accessory apartments. He also explained the differences between the State's requirements for accessory apartments and the Town's requirements. A discussion ensued about the meaning of appurtenance and the relevance it should have with the Town's definition of accessory apartments. Staff Member Strniste explained that by eliminating the owner occupancy requirement for accessory dwellings, and by not aligning with the State's standards, the Commission would indirectly eliminate any reason for him to recommend that someone build an accessory dwelling instead of a two-family dwelling. Development Review Board Member Chapek explained that he was a proponent of the owner occupancy requirement because it helps build a stronger community, and that the owner occupancy requirement would not prohibit income producing properties. Furthermore, he suggested that the Board could be given the ability to grant a waiver for certain situations where owner occupancy of one of the units is not feasible. Commissioner Kearns questioned the owner occupancy policy and what it would actually solve. Chair C. Seybolt stated her concern regarding the sense of community, while Commissioner Linde expressed her sentiment that the owner would likely take more interest in the property.

[8:13] Staff Member Strniste advised the Commission that they should view accessory apartments as a reward, which is why he proposed that only administrative review would be required, while anything greater than an accessory apartment would require more review by the Board. Commissioner Kearns expressed her concern about implementing a regulation that is meant to be waived, and that an owner occupancy requirement would limit opportunities for investors. She continued to state that due to the volatile job market and high cost of living the owner occupancy requirement would be a burden to property owners. Lastly, she stated she may be open to the owner occupancy requirement if there was some sort of military waiver added. Board Member Chapek recommended a time waiver in place of a military waiver. He continued to state that the real intent of accessory apartments is to have a family member nearby with his or her separate space, not necessarily to rent. Commissioner Edson stated that he believed that the original intent

of accessory apartments included the ability to rent. Commissioner Gregson opposed Commissioner Edson's assertion.

[8:26] Commissioner Gregson recommended tabling the current discussion about multi-unit housing, and to commence the next discussion with their presentation materials on where multi-unit housing should be located in the Town of Underhill.

[8:32] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to adjourn.** Commissioner Bergersen made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Commissioner Kearns. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted By:
Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the April 13, 2017 meeting were accepted this 27th day of April, 2017.


Chair C. Seybolt, Planning Commission Chair